Minutes of the

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches

Video Conference, 17-20 May 2021

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I. First Plenary Session, 17 May 2021 – Opening Actions

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Dr Agnes Abuom (Anglican Church of Kenya), moderator of the central committee, welcomed the executive committee to its meeting by video conference. She thanked God for the opportunity to meet and hoped that the members were all keeping well. She expressed gratitude for the last executive committee meeting in February and its results. She encouraged the members to take advantage of the time before the sessions and during the break for fellowship and sharing with each other. The current situation continues to be a burden on all and we must shoulder it together. She felt blessed to work with the members and appreciated their care and willingness to pray, and assist each other to ensure that the work of the council continues with few interruptions.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (Romanian Orthodox Church) greeted the committee in this post paschal period and in the joyful atmosphere of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. A short video of the great feast of the resurrection was shown with the cathedral choir singing a paschal hymn in Romanian. Following this, H.E. Metropolitan Nifon led the group in prayer.

B. Opening Actions

Dr Abuom moderated the decision session. A quorum of 20 executive committee members present was confirmed. The committee approved its agenda.

The minutes of the 15-17 February 2021 meeting of the executive committee were approved.

A special welcome was extended to Mrs Ana María Velilla de Medio (Iglesia Evangélica de los Discipulos de Cristo) who was participating on behalf of Rev. Cora Luisa Antonio Matamoros (Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua) who was unable to participate.

Mr Douglas Chial gave a brief overview of the agenda and the schedule for the first day of the meeting. He also introduced some revised protocols for participating in the meeting by video conference, including using the 'Raise Hand' icon to ask for the floor. These protocols would also be used for the upcoming central committee meeting.

C. Moderator's Remarks

The committee met in a hearing session and the moderator offered her remarks to the committee.

She said that the most frequently raised questions to her include:
1. When will WCC elect a new general secretary?
2. Is it sure the assembly will take place?
3. What is the future of ecumenism, the ecumenical movement and in particular of WCC?

She said that these questions also resonate with WCC's constituency. The ecumenical movement still remains valid and relevant, now and for the next 20-40 years. Perhaps not in the same exact structure or form, but the WCC as a global convening body that offers some safe space, is still needed. The movement was needed in the earlier years, at WCC's formation, and the WCC is still needed today because of the current challenges and continuing historical issues such as racism and inequality. The pandemic threatens to divide communities even more, yet we need each other to become whole. Working in partnership, which has been one of our approaches, is key to ecumenism in addressing different challenges. There is a need, as WCC, to reflect on the ongoing governance work, to rethink our methodologies and enlarge our scope.

Since the Busan assembly the pilgrimage of justice and peace has been a concept, framework and methodology. The emphasis of the pilgrimage has been prayer, working and walking together, and inviting others on board. However more reflection is needed. The example of the recent pilgrim team visit to North America could offer a way to develop more options for healing, in our context, in view of what the pandemic has brought to our constituencies. In this current context of the pandemic, what do the three dimensions that are used to walk a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace: *via positiva* (celebrating the blessings); *via negativa* (visiting the wounds) and *via transformativa* (transforming injustices) mean, when few people can meet and reflect together?

She continued by quoting Deuteronomy 1:6-7 "The Lord our God said to us at Horeb, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance…" Perhaps the current context with all its potentials, opportunities and challenges actually speaks to us and raises the question "Do we need to break camp? If so, with whom and where do we move?" Reflection is needed on whether the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications today call on us as an organization and as a movement to "break camp".

In the media and in secular organizations there are many articles about being so dependent on technology that we erode the quality of our health, lives, and our relationships, e.g. especially with mobile phones. How do we ensure that this does not happen?

The WCC has a programme on the safety of children in the worship, home and in the public spaces. Today we live in a situation where the governments making decrees on children matters – when to go to school, when to stay in lockdown – but they are not engaging parents, not engaging the children, and not engaging religious communities in such discussions. It may be necessary for WCC to rethink the programme and, going forward, ask what the pandemic has meant to the children, what stories they have – of survival, of resilience and experiences. It would also be important to see how the church is responding to this situation. Making programmes virtual is not difficult, but can the church engage children more creatively?

In terms of breaking camp and moving on, there is the issue of a deepening cleavage in terms of young people's participation. Young people are an important part of the ecumenical movement and the church. They are at ease with and understand the technology, are connected in networks and are very active. Those of us in leadership have to think seriously of how we can get this generation of ecumenists and the next to use their skills. The pandemic

has opened up the ecumenical movement and has enhanced the quality of our movement in unexpected ways.

In considering how we carry each other, the moderator urged the executive committee to go further but to go together, mindful of where we all are coming from.

Her final remarks focused on how the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously challenged our movement and our churches. She asked if the methodologies of conferences, travel, visits, expressions of solidarity through ministries of presence were still valid after 70 years. Does the ecumenical movement make sense to ordinary Christians in our countries? The WCC has seen itself as a boat inviting those to join in the journey towards unity, in mission, justice and *diakonia* and we have gone very far. But in terms of those involved, the ecumenical boat seems to getting smaller.

This executive committee needs to consider, given the assembly theme, how WCC can really help the churches and communities to reflect on a new approach to ecumenism, to living together in unity and diversity. Where have we stayed too long and need to move on? Is it our methodologies and approaches, is it our way of reflection, is it the way we operate which may not really allow for space to be able to express and engage holistically? How does each congregation in a community experience the wholesomeness of God's presence amongst God's people? How can the people experience the assembly theme?

Inasmuch as this transition is proving long and unexpected and it is unclear where the curves and valleys will be tomorrow, it is important to pinpoint that which we find absolutely necessary. What is it that together, through the next assembly, we can bequeath to generations to come, particularly from the learnings of this last period of our work.

The moderator was thanked by the committee for her remarks and the text forwarded to the sub-committees for further consideration.

D. Report of the Acting General Secretary

The report of the acting general secretary is recorded here in full:

Some of us are still celebrating the season of Easter, so I greet all of you with the joy that Christ is risen!

Introduction

I am deeply thankful for your participation in this meeting and for the commitment of each one of you to the fellowship of member churches. This meeting is our fifth meeting online. After one year, we have gotten used to meeting like this, but I look forward to the time we can welcome you again at Bossey. Our agenda this week includes many ordinary actions for a May meeting of the executive committee. It also provides time to consult with you on preparations for the central committee in June.

Highlights from our work

The accountability reports from February, March and April contain details of what we have been doing since the executive committee last met. I want to share some highlights that I think represent the WCC at its best. In spite of the pandemic, the WCC continues to fulfil its strategic role in convening member churches, shaping ecumenical discourse, and ensuring a sense of coherence in our work with others.

A central feature of our work remains the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace as the strategic direction for all we do. This year we are on a pilgrimage with the churches in North America addressing issues of racism and solidarity with indigenous communities. Our pilgrim team visits to places like Standing Rock, the Arctic Circle, the Six Nations, Minneapolis, Charleston, Ferguson and Chicago may be online, but they are powerful expressions of fellowship. The pilgrimage also includes harvesting from the past eight years of journeying together for justice and peace; as well as a series of online regional consultations on the impact of COVID-19.

The executive committee has given considerable attention to ensuring the sustainability of WCC Jerusalem-based activities, especially the accompaniment programme in Palestine and Israel. We have made good progress towards our target of implementing the new structure by July 2021. Last month the annual meeting of EAPPI national coordinators took place in a spirit of collaboration. We have more work to do, but I am pleased that all of our stake holders, including the local Heads of Churches, are supportive of our efforts to strengthen accompaniment and advocacy in the region.

We had hoped that in-person accompaniment would resume in March. It was not possible. Instead, we produced the EAPPI Easter initiative to raise awareness through prayer and Bible study, focussing on four emblematic sites in the Easter narrative – the road from Jericho to Jerusalem; Bethany; the Mount of Olives; and the Holy Sepulchre.

One of the foundations of our work is theological dialogue. We recently published over 700 pages of responses and analysis on the convergence text *The Church Towards a Common Vision*. This is the culmination of many years of study. It will help the churches articulate a vision for unity at the assembly. We also initiated a series of webinars on the work of the churches and moral discernment. It is increasingly important for the churches to be able to talk about issues where there are many different opinions. As we prepare for an ecumenical conversation on human sexuality at the assembly, this becomes increasingly sensitive.

You know my passion for the work of the Bossey Ecumenical Institute. Last year the academic courses continued, more or less as planned. The pandemic inspired the Bossey faculty to develop its first online ecumenical formation course, which took place last month with over 80 students. The Bossey adaptation continues with a global consultation on teaching ecumenism. By God's grace, we hope to welcome a new generation of young people in September for the 2021-2022 academic courses.

The global health situation remains disturbing. The pandemic seems out of control in places like India and Brazil. We continue to lose many dear friends and we are troubled by so much suffering. The vaccine offers hope – hope that the virus can be controlled and hope that we can be together again in-person. Last month the WCC joined the World Immunization Week

with nine church leaders from different continents serving as vaccine champions. Even in our work with the German government to secure funding for the assembly, we are planning a high-level joint meeting in October to promote a fair and just distribution of the vaccine worldwide. We must exercise the considerable influence we hold, and the trust placed in us as church leaders to do everything we can to save lives.

I am particularly pleased to share with you two new executive staff appointments. I appointed Dr Masiiwa Ragies Gunda, a member of the Church of the Province of Central Africa (Anglican), as the executive to lead our work on overcoming racism. I also appointed Rev. Nathan Day Wilson, a minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States, to lead our work in fundraising, planning and reporting. Both will begin in July.

Preparations for the central committee

We have continued preparing the central committee by consulting with churches that held large online assemblies, by surveying central committee members about their experience and needs and by building on the best practices of the executive committee.

We will use Zoom and SharePoint because they are the most familiar and accessible platforms. We prepared a framework agenda that includes meeting in plenary, regions and standing committees. We prepared Zoom-specific protocol or conduct of meetings held by electronic communication.

The central committee agenda focusses on the assembly and membership matters. The assembly planning committee met last week to agree on a comprehensive report to the central committee. The report *From Busan to Karlsruhe* has been revised. We have received over 75% of the total delegate nominations. Regarding membership, we expect the central committee to receive the applications for membership of two churches – the First Africa Church Mission in Nigeria and the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.

Finances and the Green Village

The financial profile for last year was quite different from other years, reflecting the adaptation of activities. Not all membership contributions were required to cover programme costs, and therefore, as authorised when we met in February, a transfer of 600,000 Swiss francs could be made to the assembly fund. The general reserves closed at the target of 7 million Swiss francs.

Last week the Green Village Steering Committee met. Following the investor competition process for Kyoto, the steering committee decided jointly with Implenia to grant exclusivity until the end of June to the best offer, selected from three received, and which comes from the OikosInvest Foundation. Details of terms and conditions will be negotiated until the end of June. The executive committee has the responsibility to decide whether to accept the final offer when terms are finalised. A short online meeting, or a process of decision making, may be required at the end of June.

Assembly in 2022

The COVID-19 situation remains fluid. The most frequently asked question these days is “can the assembly take place in September 2022”. More than anything, “we want to be together”,

and that is what we are planning, including different scenarios for health and sanitary requirements.

We must remain full of hope that we will meet in Karlsruhe next year. We must also continue to monitor the situation, relying on facts and the professional advice of health experts. With that in mind, I propose the executive committee meets briefly in July to be updated on the situation, because to wait until November will be is too late. We have to be responsible to our host churches.

A few weeks ago I was not very confident that we could hold an assembly. In the last three weeks my mind has changed. Countries are opening up, people are being given certificates of vaccination and by the end of year, most of those in North America and Europe will be vaccinated. The rest of world is also progressing, though more slowly, but vaccines are becoming more and more available. I am sure the whole world will be able to come. This is my personal opinion. As you consider my report in the sub-committees, please discuss this and come with a decision if we have to meeting in July to discuss holding the assembly in 2022.

Closing
I close the way I began, with gratitude. I am grateful for your devotion to the WCC. I am grateful for the dedicated service of commission members, advisory groups and our partners for their contributions and support. I am ever grateful to the WCC staff and staff leadership group for their tremendous dedication in serving the fellowship of WCC member churches. I am also very impressed with the leadership of the central committee with whom we meet quite frequently, almost as if they were staff! Thank you very much to everybody.

Dr Abuom thanked the acting general secretary for his succinct and comprehensive report. The report was received and forwarded to the sub-committees for action.

After a brief break the committee met in a hearing session.

The committee observed a minute of silence in remembrance of the late Dr Soritua Nababan, former vice-moderator of the central committee and former WCC President from Asia, and others lost since the last meeting.

E. Overview of Matters for Decision

The acting general secretary was invited to present the overview of matters for decision.

This meeting includes the ordinary agenda items for the spring meeting of the executive committee. It also includes preparation for the central committee in June. Some documents for review by the executive are for the central committee.

The overview presents the matters for decision before this meeting so that all members are aware of what each sub-committee will address. Any member can send comments to any sub-committee by email. Sub-committees would meet on Tuesday and Wednesday. The public

issue committee would meet on Tuesday. On Thursday sub-committee reports and a revised public issue statement would be reviewed in plenary.

The "**draft report of the executive committee to the central committee**" is presented for consideration and revision. It is an accountability report on the work of the executive committee since the last meeting of the central committee. It includes appendices listing the public issue statements made by the executive committee and follow up to the recommendations and decisions of the June 2018 central committee. The report should be reviewed in each sub-committee.

A "**draft call to overcome global injustice and inequity**, to defeat the global COVID-19 pandemic" will be presented in plenary. The draft is referred to the public issues sub-committee, under the leadership of His Eminence Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon. A revised statement will be reviewed in plenary on Thursday.

The **programme sub-committee agenda** includes narrative reports from 2020 and an update on Jerusalem-based activities. The agenda also includes the review of documents for the central committee, namely the comprehensive report of the assembly planning committee and the report "From Busan to Karlsruhe". The items are referred to the programme sub-committee, under the leadership of Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber (Evangelical Church in Germany).

The **matters for decision on governance** include nominations, membership, by-laws for the commission on health and healing, the March report of the assembly planning committee and an update on preparations for the central committee. The agenda also includes the review of documents for the central committee, including membership matters and assembly nominations. The matters are referred to the sub-committee on personnel, staffing and nominations, under the leadership of Bishop Simo Peura (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland).

The **finance sub-committee agenda** includes financial monitoring; the comprehensive report of the auditors; the addendum to the financial strategy 2018-2021; and the outline of the possible agenda for the finance policy committee. The matters are referred to the finance sub-committee, under the leadership of His Eminence Dr Archbishop Vicken Aykazian (Armenian Apostolic Church [Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin]).

The moderator thanked the acting general secretary for the presentation.

1. Report of the Executive Committee to the Central Committee

Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson (United Methodist Church), vice-moderator of the central committee, presented the draft report of the executive committee to the central committee. According to WCC Rule VIII. 1. b.: "The executive committee shall be accountable to the central committee and shall present to each central committee meeting a report of its work. The central committee shall consider such a report and take such action in regard to it as it thinks fit."

The last in-person meeting of the central committee took place in June 2018. It was intended to meet again in March 2020, but that meeting had to be postponed due to the pandemic. Because of the ongoing restrictions, the central committee meeting in June 2021 will take place by video conference. This report represents the work of the executive committee since the last central committee meeting. Bishop Swenson gave a quick overview of the content of the report. This report would be discussed in the sub-committees.

Several committee members thanked the acting general secretary and his staff, for a good, comprehensive draft report.

A brief discussion was held on the proposed amendments to the WCC Rules and Supplement to the Rules by the working group on constitution and rules, appointed at the June 2018 central committee meeting. H.E. Metropolitan Nifon wanted to be sure that when the report is finally presented to an in-person meeting of the central committee, the contributions already made by the executive committee, would also be included.

Although no substantive discussion of the proposed amendments would take place in the central committee meeting in June 2021, Mrs Anne Glynn Mackoul (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East) suggested that the executive committee make a recommendation to the central committee to set up a group to review the report of the working group, specifically on electronic communications in light of the experiences of the pandemic, but also regarding the executive committee discussions held since the report was completed in February 2020. The issue was referred to the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee which addresses governance matters.

2. First presentation of public issues

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon, as moderator of the public issues sub-committee, was invited to introduce the session. He drew the attention of the committee members to the "draft call to overcome global injustice and inequity, to defeat the global COVID-19 pandemic". The members were invited to send any amendments to this draft, as well as other proposals to the public issues sub-committee by Tuesday, 18 May by 10:30 (Geneva time). The public issues sub-committee would meet at 11:00 on Tuesday.

Mr Peter Prove was asked to speak to the work of the sub-committee and reiterated the concern of some members that there were other pressing issues besides those addressed in the draft call, e.g. Israel/Palestine conflict, and the situations in Ethiopia and Myanmar. He reminded the committee of the principle that in those cases where a situation has been addressed recently by the general secretary on behalf of the WCC, then a new statement is not needed unless there have been significant new developments.

With regard to the conflict in Israel/Palestine, the acting general secretary issued two significant statements earlier in May. There have also been news releases and stories, two of which were published on that same day. The executive committee can still speak on the issue, especially if things escalate or there are significant developments. For Myanmar and Ethiopia, these have been addressed in recent days at level of the acting general secretary, either through statements or by other means.

Mr Prove informed the committee that the first half of the draft call was background information for the executive committee, for substantiating the need for such a statement. The second half is the actual text and is presented for action. Some comments and proposals were already received and will be discussed by the sub-committee.

H.E. Metropolitan Seraphim Kykotis (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa), in relation to the Israel/Palestine conflict, hoped that a unique approach could be taken and that other possibilities besides issuing a statement could be explored. He was invited to send a proposal to and participate in the public issues sub-committee meeting.

Mrs Velilla de Medio lifted up the difficult situation in Colombia. She felt it would be important to say something about this serious situation which has gone on for a long time. A delegation from Argentina visited Colombia and included members from Peace and Justice and from several churches.

Mr Proved thanked her for raising this concern. He said that over last days the staff had been working closely with group of global church and ecumenical counterparts, preparing a significant letter to the president of Colombia on this situation. The partners include ACT Alliance, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Anglican Alliance and the World Methodist Council. It is hoped that CELAM, the council of the Roman Catholic bishops of Latin America, may also participate in the joint letter. The letter is meant to go out later in the day. Mrs Velilla de Medio added that she could be in touch with the Nobel Prize laureate, Adolfo Perez Esquival, who may be willing to participate in the joint letter.

Dr Abuom thanked Mr Prove for explaining the statement, and she was very grateful to the team of the secretariat, and the different ways in which the acting general secretary is responding to the issues. She reiterated the invitation to the members to send their comments and proposals in and participate in the sub-committee.

For the prayers at the end of the session, H.E. Metropolitan Nifon played a recording of the Easter hymn:

> Christ is risen from the dead
> Trampling down death by death, and
> For those in the tombs bestowing life.

He led the group in a closing prayer.

II. Second Plenary Session, 20 May

A. Opening Remarks and Prayer

After two days of sub-committee meetings, reports were presented in plenary. H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Ecumenical Patriarchate), vice-moderator of the central committee, greeted the committee and moderated the decision session. A quorum of 18 members of the executive committee present was confirmed.

H.E. Metropolitan Seraphim led the committee in an opening prayer.

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios informed the committee of the global prayer for the Holy Land which would take place online following the executive committee meeting.

B. Report of the Public Issues Sub-Committee

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon, moderator of the public issues sub-committee, had welcomed Mrs Glynn Mackoul and H.E. Metropolitan Seraphim to their meeting. The sub-committee worked on the report and statement. He invited Mr Prove to read the report.

The sub-committee received and revised the following texts now presented to the executive committee:

1. Call to Overcome Global Injustice and Inequity (COVID-19 vaccines) revised

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting by video-conference on 17-20 May 2021, applauds the cooperation and collaboration of the global scientific community that led to unprecedented rapid progress in understanding SARS-CoV-2 and developing reliable diagnostics, therapeutic models and highly effective vaccines. At the same time, we also recognize that similar global cooperation has not yet been demonstrated in the distribution of these scientific advances to all of humankind, which suffers unequally from the continuing burdens of this pandemic.

We call upon all with the power to address the lamentable injustice and inequity revealed by the pandemic — governments, agencies, religious leaders, boards and leaders of corporations with ownership of patents and materials — to exercise leadership and act together urgently to ensure broad, rapid, equitable and affordable distribution of therapeutics and vaccines worldwide, to overcome this failure and to right this wrong.

Since the supply of vaccines remains insufficient to meet the global need, and has been concentrated in countries able to pay a premium to ensure access, we support calls for the temporary waiver of relevant patents and other intellectual property rights, in order to remove a key obstacle to increased manufacturing and supply, especially in countries currently marginalized and excluded from adequate supply of

needed vaccines. In addition, we call on all nations with greater supplies of vaccine to share their abundance, especially with lower-income countries, and to lift export restrictions in relation to COVID-19 health products.

We appeal also for the compassionate sharing of technology and know-how, to enable manufacturers in hard-hit countries in the Global South to produce vaccines for their people and others. We urge greater support for and contributions to the WHO COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) as a key instrument for this purpose, and to the COVAX facility for more equitable distribution of available vaccine supplies.

We recognize that, beyond issues of supply and distribution of vaccines, other factors have intensified the impacts of the pandemic and as yet stand in the way of an exit from this crisis. First among these has been the lamentable failure of some leaders to act in accordance with scientific evidence, leading to devastating consequences for the health and lives of their own people and the further spread of the virus globally. These failures have cost many precious lives, and will result in longer and deeper suffering. We call on all political leaders to act for the health and safety of all those living within their borders, to advance the scientific and medical remedies that will ease the pandemic in their countries and help hasten the end of the crisis globally.

We also acknowledge that vaccine hesitancy, fuelled by conspiracy theories, misinformation and misleading theologies, is a major obstacle in many societies, including within our own churches. We thank God for those religious leaders – including the WCC 'Vaccine Champions' – who are leading by example and encouraging members of their congregations and communities to consider vaccination not only as a matter of self-protection but also as an act of care and compassion for the 'neighbour', for the whole community and for the future of our young people.

God of life, we pray for those who have died, for those who grieve, and for all those whose lives, livelihoods and prospects have been diminished by the pandemic and its effects. We pray for those who long for hope, truth and love during this time of isolation and uncertainty. Inspire us all with the wisdom and compassion for others that will enable us all – political leaders, religious leaders, and all people of goodwill – together to find the path out from under the dark cloud of this pandemic and into your brighter future.

After some suggestions by the committee, the statement was approved by consensus.

2. Message to Churches and People of the Holy Land

Regarding the current conflict situation in Israel and Palestine, the public issues sub-committee received information on actions recently undertaken by the acting general secretary on the matter. In light of these recent actions, sub-committee did not propose a public issue statement by the executive committee at this time. Rather, it is proposed that on behalf of the executive committee a message of solidarity be sent to the churches and people of the Holy Land:

Members of the executive committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting by video-conference on 17-20 May, are appalled and deeply moved by the suffering inflicted as a result of the currently ongoing hostilities in the Holy Land, mindful of the history of the people of the region.

We convey to the churches and the people of the region our close accompaniment in prayer and in solidarity. With all those who have lost loved ones, been injured, suffered harm and fear as a result of the awful violence and destruction, we grieve.
We renew our fervent prayer that God will bring compassion and wisdom into the hearts and minds of those responsible for the violence, and healing and consolation to the victims of their confrontation.
We ache for the fighting to stop, and for the search for true peace, founded on justice and an end to occupation, to really begin. We yearn for a just peace in the Holy Land for all the people of the region – Jews, Muslims and Christians, Israelis and Palestinians, in equality and mutual respect – so that all may sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid (Micah 4:4).

The message was approved by consensus.

Letter to UN Security Council Members – for information
In addition, the sub-committee received and considered a text for a letter or an appeal to UN Security Council members calling for unified action for an immediate ceasefire, intended to be sent by the acting general secretary. That text was presented for information.

In light of proposals made by executive committee members, public issues sub-committee also considered the possibility of actions on the following issues:

3. Other Issues

Colombia: No additional action by the executive committee is recommended at this time, in light of the significant joint letter to President Duque which has just been finalized, with the co-sponsorship of WCC, ACT Alliance, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Anglican Communion, World Methodist Council, CELAM (the Latin American regional Conference of Catholic Bishops), and the World Association for Christian Communication (https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/ecumenical-letter-to-colombian-president-ivan-duque).

The sub-committee highlighted the historic ecumenical significance of CELAM joining this letter, believed to be the first time that a regional Catholic Bishops Conference has joined with WCC in such a letter to a head of state.

Myanmar: The sub-committee received a briefing on actions recently taken by WCC on this matter, since the military coup, including consultation with the churches and national council of churches in Myanmar, two joint statements with the Christian Conference of Asia, co-sponsorship of a civil society call for an arms embargo on Myanmar, and planned follow-up and lobbying in advance of a vote on a UN General Assembly resolution expected next week.

In light of these recent and ongoing actions, the sub-committee did not recommend a public issue statement by the executive committee at this time but encouraged the acting general secretary to pursue these efforts.

Ethiopia: the sub-committee received a briefing on WCC's recent statements, support for an inter-religious week of prayer in Ethiopia, and ongoing efforts to coordinate with ecumenical partners concerned about the situation, in the aftermath of the conflict in Tigray and in light of the multiple concurrent crises affecting the country. WCC plans to undertake further consultations with member churches in Ethiopia on ways in which WCC and ecumenical partners may support and accompany the churches in their ministries in this complex and difficult situation. In the circumstances, the sub-committee did not recommend a public issue statement by the executive committee at this time but encouraged the acting general secretary to further explore ways of supporting and accompanying the churches in Ethiopia in addressing these crises.

Debt relief in the context of the pandemic and its impacts: A proposal was received for a letter on behalf of the executive committee to the IMF, the World Bank and to G8 leaders, appealing for the return of half of the sum of debt service payments by low-income countries, for use in programmes for the protection of children in the context of the pandemic.

The recommendation that the executive committee refer this proposal to the acting general secretary for follow-up through WCC's economy of life programme was approved by consensus.

The entire report of the public issues sub-committee was adopted by consensus.

C. Report of the Programme Sub-Committee

Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber, moderator of the programme sub-committee, expressed her thanks to the members of the sub-committee for the significant work done. This was only possible because of the careful and professional preparations done by the staff. Special thanks were given to Rev. Karin van den Broeke (Protestant Church in the Netherlands), rapporteur for the sub-committee. She was invited to present the report of the programme sub-committee.

The programme sub-committee received the 'Overview of matters for decision on programme' (Doc. No. 04) and approved it as a guideline for the agenda of the sub-committee.

1. **Moderator's remarks** (Doc. No. 02)

The recommendation that the executive committee receive the remarks with appreciation and thank the leadership team for the work done was approved by consensus.

2. **Report of the Acting General Secretary** (Doc. No.3)

The recommendations that the executive committee

a. receive the report with appreciation;
b. agree with the statement by the acting general secretary that we need to stick to the clear agenda in the central committee meeting June 2021;
c. agree with the proposal to meet briefly in July to be updated on the situation of the Assembly and of the Green Village;
d. underline that theological dialogue is one of the foundations of WCC's work and affirm the importance for churches to be able to talk about issues where there are many different opinions;
e. thank the acting general secretary and his staff for the work done

were approved by consensus.

3. **Draft report of the executive committee to the central committee** (Doc. No. 05; 05.1; 05.2)

Mrs Glynn-Mackoul asked that that at the end of the meeting some discussion centre on how this document would be completed before publishing for the assembly. This was accepted.

The recommendation that the executive committee receive the draft report with appreciation, suggesting that the end of the report reads like a letter and should be revised to reflect its nature as a document submitted to the central committee was approved by consensus.

4. **Follow Up to decisions on programme** (Doc. No. 06)

The recommendation that the executive committee receive the report with appreciation for information was approved by consensus.

5. **Narrative programme reports 2020** (Doc. No. 07; 07.1)

The recommendations that the executive committee

a. receive the 2020 narrative programme reports with appreciation;
b. highlight how the reports reflect the adaptation to the pandemic;
c. express appreciation for the staff for the work done under these very special circumstances;
d. underline the convening role the WCC played, even in COVID time and the positive signs we have seen in 2020;
e. realize that the digital innovation was enormous, although not all churches are able to share in these innovations; the question of connectivity is a question for the whole movement, to leave no one behind;
f. request the staff to collect the different experiences of the work of the WCC during the pandemic in relation to the regular monitoring

were approved by consensus.

6. **Update on Jerusalem Liaison Office Restructuring** (Doc. No. 26) and **Jerusalem Liaison Office Advisory Committee Terms of Reference** (Doc. No. 26.1)

The recommendations that the executive committee

a. express appreciation for the work done to clarify structures, roles, budgets, coordination between offices, mechanisms for monitoring and finding new ways to implement alternative methods of accompaniment;
b. receive the update on Jerusalem Liaison Office restructuring;
c. approve the Jerusalem Office Advisory Committee terms of reference (Appendix)

were approved by consensus.

7. **Preparing an addendum to the WCC Strategic Plan (2018-2021)**

The programme sub-committee discussed the need for an addendum to extend the strategic plan by one year to include 2022 and to include lessons learned in 2020 and 2021. The programme sub-committee noted that the strategic plan was a helpful tool for guiding and monitoring the work of the WCC. The framework of the strategic plan did not need to be revised.

The addendum should highlight how the WCC responded and adapted in a time of unprecedented change. It should also name some of the challenges experienced such as the impact of isolation on sharing fellowship in a deep meaningful way, increased inequalities, domestic violence, health and mental health, the impact on children and young people, as well as the challenges of connectivity.

The recommendation that the executive committee ask the general secretary to prepare an addendum to the Strategic Plan 2018-2022 recommending that the central committee extend the period of the WCC strategic plan to include 2022, recognizing that the strategy has helped guide the responsiveness and adaptation needed in facing a global pandemic, and that the pilgrimage of justice and peace continues to be a strong strategic direction was approved by consensus.

Mrs Glynn-Mackoul reminded the group that in previous meetings the leadership of the programme and finance sub-committees had a joint discussion. This could have been helpful for the discussion on extending the strategic plan and financial strategy. She hoped that, as a standard element in the executive committee's agenda, before sub-committee reports are finished, such a meeting could take place.

8. **Report of the Assembly Planning Committee** (GEN PRO 02)

The sub-committee discussed the report of the APC.

The recommendations that the executive committee

a. receive the report of the APC with appreciation, noting that it provides a helpful overview of the assembly programme, that there is still more work to be done and the need to plan with different scenarios concerning the impact of pandemic;

b. encourage the APC to continue planning the ecumenical conversation on human sexuality with sensitivity. The conversation should be planned in continuity with the serious and sustained work accomplished recently on churches and moral discernment and in the Conversation on the Pilgrim's Way: 'Invitation to journey together on matters of human sexuality - resource document'. This conversation should recognize that there are many different opinions within the fellowship, and that matters of human sexuality are, for some churches, church-dividing issues. Matters of human sexuality should be discussed in a spirit of mutual respect, love and reconciliation, as well as in a way ensuring the spirit of safe space;
c. affirm the assembly planning committee report as a comprehensive and concise account of its work since the central committee meeting in June 2018; and forward the report to the central committee for action

were approved by consensus.

9. Draft report From Busan to Karlsruhe (GEN COM 02)

The recommendations that the executive committee

a. receive the report as worthy harvesting of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace;
b. affirm the revised draft From Busan to Karlsruhe;
c. affirm the revised timeline 2021;
d. underline the importance of theological reflection and dialogue of the pilgrimage and of the new assembly theme 'Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity';
e. underline the importance of the mentioned thematic issues of the reference groups, acknowledge their work and increase the visibility of working groups and reference groups;
f. underline the importance of having pre-assemblies to harvest from different groups and to promote the participation of youth, indigenous people, people with disabilities and of women;
g. underline that overcoming racism is one of the most important challenges on our Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace;
h. highlight the importance of being in good cooperation with ACT Alliance;
i. highlight the change the pandemic caused;
j. ask the acting general secretary to add a new chapter on the consequences of the pandemic on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace to be presented to the next regular meeting of the executive committee in November for action

were approved by consensus.

The entire report was adopted by consensus. H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios thanked the leadership and members of the programme sub-committee.

D. Report of the Personnel, Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios invited Bishop Simo Peura, moderator of the sub-committee, to present the report.

1. Moderator's Remarks and Report of the Acting General Secretary

Moderator's Remarks (Doc. No. 02)
The moderator reflected on the future of the WCC and the ecumenical movement from different points of view and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. She reminded us that the ecumenical movement is needed now just as much as it was at the beginning of its formation. In our continuing quest for visible unity and fellowship, we are even more aware that we need not only the ecumenical movement but that we need each other, too. This spurs us on to pray, work, and walk together continuing on the pilgrimage of justice and peace. One of our crucial common tasks is to guarantee equitable and just access to vaccines.

The sub-committee received with appreciation the Moderator's Remarks. The serious questions raised in the document, such as the election of a new WCC general secretary, whether the assembly can go ahead in 2022 as planned given the current pandemic and the future of the ecumenical movement, need further consideration by the executive committee as it plans for the central committee meeting in June 2021.

Report of the Acting General Secretary (Doc. No. 03)
The sub-committee received the Report of the Acting General Secretary, Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, with much appreciation, for its concise, clear and coherent update on work and activities of the Council since the last meeting of the executive committee in February. The staff, working together with the acting general secretary in preparation for the assembly, were also thanked.

With regard to the proposal in the report for an extraordinary meeting of the executive committee in July, the sub-committee stated that the meeting should include only one session and the agenda should only focus on the assembly. A meeting before the regularly scheduled November executive committee is needed. By July sufficient information will be available for the executive committee to consider future plans.

The recommendation that the executive committee receive the Moderator's Remarks and the Report of the Acting General Secretary with thanks and appreciation was approved by consensus.

2. Draft Report of the Executive Committee (Doc. No. 05, 05.1, 05.2)

The sub-committee received the draft report and expressed its appreciation. It was felt that it needed to be more detailed and include further key discussions and decisions by the executive committee since the last meeting of the central committee in June 2018.

The recommendation that the executive committee receive the draft report with appreciation, suggesting the following change in point 7 on matters forwarded to the central committee

> The following matters are pending for action by the central committee. They will not be addressed at this current central committee meeting (but included in the agenda of the next in-person meeting of the central committee)

was approved by consensus.

3. **Membership Matters** (Doc. No. 09)

The sub-committee reflected at length on the various membership matters. It was noted that such matters need to be discussed first in the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration (PCCC). The matter of the Cook Islands Christian Church was put before the PCCC at its meeting in Ittingen in February/March 2021.

The following recommendations were approved by consensus.

a. Cook Islands Christian Church
   That the executive committee forward the request to the central committee recommending:
   The central committee receives with regret the decision of the Cook Islands Christian Church to resign its membership in the fellowship of WCC according to rule I.6.a; and expresses its appreciation for 41 years of membership in the WCC.

b. That the executive committee forward the following applications to the PCCC for consideration at the next meeting and, as soon as files are completed, present recommendations to the executive committee at its next regular meeting in November 2021:
   a) International Association of Women Ministers to be recognized by the central committee as an international ecumenical organization with which the World Council of Churches has working relationships;
   b) Anglican Province of Alexandria to continue membership in the WCC fellowship after it was newly inaugurated as the 41st province within the Anglican Communion;
   c) Membership applications to join the WCC fellowship of member churches: Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, Celica Church of Christ [Nigeria], Church of Central Africa Presbyterian [Malawi], Overcoming Faith Centre Church of Kenya, Apostolic Pentecostal Church (APC) International [Liberia], The Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim (Nigeria).

c. That the executive committee forward the update to the central committee recommending that:

   The central committee issue invitations to the following churches to nominate a delegated observer to the WCC 11th Assembly in 2022, recognizing the churches' strong interest to join the WCC fellowship of member churches:
   - Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria
   - Celica Church of Christ [Nigeria]
   - Church of Central Africa Presbyterian [Malawi]
   - Overcoming Faith Centre Church of Kenya
   - Apostolic Pentecostal Church (APC) International [Liberia]
   - The Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim (Nigeria)

d. That the executive committee request the general secretary to include the recommendations taken by the PCCC in regard to membership matters in documents submitted to the governing bodies for action.

4. Nominations (Doc. No. 10)

The sub-committee took note of the nominations submitted by the churches as replacements on the central committee and various commissions. It was reported that the moderator of the central committee was working on the process for replacing the president from Africa, the late Prof. Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies Van Huffel. The sub-committee also took note, with regret, that the Church of Ireland had decided not to replace its member on the central committee.

The recommendations that the executive committee affirm the nominations below and forward the names to the central committee for decision, and that they be invited to the central committee and commission meetings in anticipation of the central committee's decision were approved by consensus.

a. Central Committee
   1) The Progressive National Baptist Church, Inc. has named Rev. Dr Tyrone Pitts (M/O), its Ecumenical Officer, to replace Rev. Dr Carroll A. Baltimore (M/O) on the central committee following his resignation.
   2) The Myanmar Baptist Convention has named Rev. Dr Thang Cin Lian (M/O), its general secretary, to replace the late Rev. Dr Yam Kho Pau (M/O).
   3) The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States has named Rev. Terri Hord Owens (F/O) to replace Rev. Dr Sharon Watkins (F/O), following her retirement.
   4) The Episcopal Church of South Sudan has named Mr Elisama wani Daniel (M/L) to replace Mrs Jesca Bireri Laki Lukudu (F/L) following her resignation.
   5) The Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland has named Rev. Rainer Kiefer (M/O) to replace Bishop Dr Christoph Meyns (M/O).
   6) The Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa, has named Rev. Astrid Ntumba-Mayamba (F/O) to replace the late Rev. Dr Micheline Kamba Kasongo on the central committee.

b. Commission on Faith and Order (F&O)
   1) HG Bishop Abraham (M/O) from the Coptic Orthodox Church to replace the late Metropolitan Prof. Dr Bishoy of Damietta (M/O)
   2) Rev. Teshome Amenu (M/O) from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus to replace Rev. Dr Berhanu Ofgaa (M/O)
   3) Rev. Edilene da Silva Dias (F/O) from the Igreja Metodista no Brasil to replace Prof. Dr Magali do Nascimento Cunha (F/O)
   4) Rev. Dr Felipe Gustavo Koch Buttelli (M/O) from the Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil to replace for Rev. Dr Valerio Schaper (M/O)
   5) Rt Rev. Dr Michael Ipgrave (M/O) from the Church of England to replace Rt Rev. Stephen Conway (M/O)

c. Assembly Planning Committee
   Rev. Anne Heitmann (F/O) from the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland to replace Bishop Dr Christoph Meyns (M/O).

5. **By-Laws of the Commission on Health and Healing** (Doc. No. 11)

The sub-committee appreciated the work done on the by-laws of the new commission since the last regular meeting of the executive committee in November 2020. It was understood that the implementation of this commission would only begin after the 11th Assembly.

It was confirmed that the by-laws were drafted on the standard model of the other commissions.

The recommendation that the executive committee receive the proposed by-laws of the new Commission on Health and Healing and forward them to the central committee for action (pending business) was approved by consensus.

6. **Report of the Assembly Planning Committee, March 2021** (Doc. No. 12)

The sub-committee expressed its appreciation for the work of the Assembly Planning Committee (APC) as described in the report from its meeting in March 2021. A discussion took place on the Ecumenical Conversation No. 11 – Conversations on the Pilgrim Way, mentioned in the report. The sub-committee felt that the detailed framework planned for the ecumenical conversation during the assembly, as well as the description of the "Overall Aim", should follow the thoughtful and careful model of the Reference Group on Human Sexuality, consistent with the survey of member churches that finds such wide diversity among the member churches, emphasizing mutual respect, love and reconciliation.

The recommendations that the executive committee
a) receive the report with appreciation, affirming the various recommendations made by the APC, and
b) agree to continue monitoring the possible impact of the pandemic on the assembly, together with the host churches

were approved by consensus.

7. **Central Committee June 2021 Preparations** (Doc. No. 13)

The sub-committee received the document with appreciation for the work done in preparation of the next central committee meeting. It was reported that 111 central committee members had confirmed their participation (as per 19 May 2021). Concern was expressed about reaching 2/3 threshold of participation needed for a meeting by electronic communications (Rule XVIII.8).

The recommendation that the executive committee endorse the proposal and further advice as the basis for finalizing the agenda and conduct of the meeting of the central committee 23-29 June by electronic communication was approved by consensus.

8. **Central Committee Pending Business** (Doc. No. 14)

The sub-committee discussed the pending matters for the central committee taking note of the previous actions of the executive committee on various matters.

The recommendations that the executive committee
a) ask the general secretary to integrate the suggestions received by the sub-committee, and
b) confirm the list of pending business of the central committee, to be included in the report of the acting general secretary to the central committee

were approved by consensus.

9. **Follow-up to Decisions on Governance and Nominations** (Doc. No. 08)

The sub-committee discussed the document with appreciation for the follow up work done by the acting general secretary and the staff.

With regard to Item F in the document on pre-assembly programme evaluation, it was reported that the process is delayed. The focus has been on change and adaptation in programme delivery. Starting this evaluation will be a priority and an update will be brought to the next meeting of the executive committee in November 2021.

With regard to Item C.4 on constitution and rules review, the status was corrected to read "pending" (Doc. No. 08 rev). A new recommendation regarding the work on constitution and rules review will be brought to the next meeting of the executive committee in November 2021 in preparation for the central committee meeting.

10. **Draft documents for central committee**

The governance agenda includes the review of documents for the central committee, including membership matters, nominations and assembly delegation nominations. The sub-committee reviewed the documents and suggested some changes.

The recommendation that the executive committee request that the following documents be finalized and forwarded to the central committee for action:

- GEN PRC 03 Draft Membership Matters
- GEN NOM 02 Draft Nominations
- GEN NOM 03 Draft Assembly Nominations

was approved by consensus.

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios asked that the names of the sub-committee members be added to the report in the style of the other reports. He thanked the moderator of the sub-committee, Rev. Martina Viktorie Kopecká (Czechoslovak Hussite Church), the rapporteur and the staff for the work done to produce this report.

The entire report was adopted by consensus.

E. Report of the Finance Sub-committee

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios invited H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian, moderator of the finance sub-committee, and Rev. Karl Johnson (Jamaica Baptist Union), the rapporteur to present the report. H.E. Archbishop Vicken took a moment to thank Ms Elaine Dykes, finance director, and her staff for the good work done in preparation of the finance sub-committee meeting. The rapporteur presented the report.

1. Remarks of the moderator and report of the acting general secretary (Doc. Nos. 02 and 03)

The sub-committee concurred with the moderator's affirmation that the WCC is needed now, in this time of change, just as much as at its founding; and concurred also with the call to commit to quality and wholesomeness in the relationships within the fellowship. The finance sub-committee was also challenged by the remarks that called for a fresh look at WCC's structures and methodologies.

The finance sub-committee expressed sincere thanks for the continued leadership of the acting general secretary, whose response to the call to serve has been deeply appreciated in this challenging time, and for a period longer than might have been expected.

The finance sub-committee discussed the observation of the acting general secretary, that "the financial profile for last year was quite different from other years".

- Total programme expenditure had closed about CHF 2 million under the revised budget, while in prior years, it would have tended to be close to budget;
- Programme staff costs had represented 55% of total programme expenditure, while in prior years, staff costs would have represented less than 50% of the total; and
- Membership contributions of CHF 0.8 million were not required to cover programme costs, while in recent years they would have been required to the full; and CHF 0.6 million could therefore be transferred to the assembly fund in 2020.

2. Draft report of the executive committee to central committee (Doc. Nos. 05, and 05.2)

The finance sub-committee received the draft report and appendix with gratitude. While it was recognised that brevity would be a virtue, it was considered that further information should be provided on matters of significance undertaken by executive committee and its sub-committees, during this unexpectedly extended period since 2018.

The recommendations that the executive committee:

a. include an additional appendix with a report to each of the standing committees on the significant issues addressed by executive committee through the work of the relevant sub-committee; and
b. delegate to the leadership of the finance sub-committee the authority to review and finalise the relevant section of the appendix, reporting significant issues addressed, or in progress, for finance

were approved by consensus.

3. **Financial report 2020** (Doc. No. 18)

In 2020, WCC reported total income of CHF 39.9 million, total expenditure of CHF 28.4 million, and a net increase in funds and reserves of CHF 11.5 million. The sale of Montreal land-shares for the 48 apartments was completed, recognising a gain on sale of land at CHF 18.9 million in 2020, representing 47% of the total reported income.

The target of CHF 7 million for general reserves was attained, after transfer of CHF 0.6 million to the Designated Fund for the Assembly.

The finance sub-committee expressed gratitude to the member churches and ecumenical partners who sustained or increased their individual contributions to support the Council in the challenging circumstances. Their welcome solidarity compensated to a degree for unfavourable variances, where others were not able to contribute, or reduced their contributions, due to the impacts of COVID-19.

The Financial Report 2020 was approved and authorised for issue on 30 April 2021, further to the recommendation of the audit committee, and on the decision of the leadership of the finance sub-committee, to whom executive committee delegated authority for this action in November 2020. The financial statements 2020 were published on the WCC website (https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-financial-report-2020) together with the activities appendix (https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-financial-report-2020-appendix).

The recommendation that the executive committee adopt the Financial Report 2020 was approved by consensus.

4. **Comprehensive report of the auditors** (Doc. No. 19)

The sub-committee reviewed the comprehensive report of the auditors, noting the following:

- Due to the increase in the ratio of the Green Village-related income, in relation to contributions income, WCC's tax exempt status was revoked in 2020;
- The financial statements include a tax provision of CHF 2.4 million (for 2020 and 2019); and the auditors concluded that this provision is reasonable and is fairly stated;
- In the light of the change of tax status, the auditors recommended reclassification of certain funds on the balance sheet, in order that all funds which are "WCC's own funds" are included in the category "unrestricted and designated". While an immediate action can be taken at this meeting, addressing the recommendation will also entail a review of the endowment funds, to be completed later this year.
- Further, the auditors reported two uncorrected audit differences that were reclassifications of expenditure lines with no impact on the total financial result.

The recommendation that executive committee decide that the Restricted Fund for Fixed Assets be re-classified as a designated fund, meaning a fund forming part of "WCC's own

funds"; and that it be renamed the Designated Fund for Real Estate Investment was approved by consensus.

5. **Report of the audit committee** (Doc. No. 17)

The sub-committee received with gratitude the report of the audit committee, and studied in particular the auditors' questionnaire to "those charged with governance", included at appendix 1 to Doc. No. 17.

The questions concerned how governance exercises oversight over management's processes for identifying and responding to fraud risk. "Those charged with governance" are the members of executive committee. Since it would not have proved practical, with the objective of issuance of the financial report by 30 April, to submit the questionnaire received in April to the finance sub-committee, the audit committee, which includes two members of executive committee, responded to the questions when it convened on 20 April, as representatives of "those charged with governance".

The finance sub-committee confirmed its agreement with the responses submitted by the audit committee on its behalf.

The recommendations that executive committee:

a. appoint KPMG as auditors for 2021, as proposed in the report of the audit committee;
b. request that the auditors' questionnaire addressed to "those charged with governance" be submitted to the finance sub-committee in November 2021, in order that it may be completed and approved by executive committee in the audit cycle 2021; and
c. consider including in the agenda for central committee, a decision on amendments to the Terms of Reference for the audit committee, as proposed by the audit committee in July 2019

were approved by consensus.

6. **Financial monitoring** (Doc. No. 16)

The finance sub-committee heard and reviewed reports on:

a. financial results for March 2021 compared to budget;
b. the launch and implementation plan for the new ERP system, Business Central;
c. performance against outcome indicators set in the *WCC financial strategy 2018-2021;*
d. WCC's investment portfolios; and
e. income monitoring, compared to milestones in the income development strategy.

a. *Budget 2021 and required revision*

Budget 2021 had been approved at a time when it had been anticipated that travel could be planned. Since its approval, the central committee meeting in Geneva had been postponed, in favour of a meeting by electronic means in June 2021. Other programme plans had necessarily been adapted to the continued pandemic conditions in 2021, and some postponements would have impact on contributions. The finance sub-committee recognised that although it remained an exceptional procedure, a revised budget 2021 should be

prepared and issued by executive committee, in order that monitoring and reporting continue against a more realistic benchmark.

b. *New ERP system*

The sub-committee encouraged the work in implementation of the new system, noting that: the immediate focus of work was delivery of reporting, to ensure ongoing financial monitoring; phase 2 work included time management and payroll, for implementation in 2022; and there would be particular focus on opening balance migration in the audit process for 2021.

c. *Performance against outcome indicators in the WCC financial strategy 2018-2021*

Four matters were highlighted in particular from the review:

1) It was recognised with sadness that the impact of the pandemic had resulted in the registering of membership contributions from only 156 (45%) of the member churches, reduced from 53 in the prior year (2019: 209 (60%)). It was also noted that 75 member churches, or almost half of those contributing, increased their contribution in original currency in 2020, compared to 2019; this gesture of solidarity was recognised with gratitude.
2) No update was provided on the budget for the assembly at this meeting, because of focus on the final submission in May of the funding application to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3) The building project fund requires more attention from the finance sub-committee than can be granted in the time available at this meeting.
4) At the date of report preparation, 55/94 (59%) of staff based in Switzerland had received an appraisal for 2020, which would include agreement on objectives set for 2021; and a lower rate had been achieved for field staff. The finance sub-committee considers that such an incomplete appraisal process presents risks, and requires corrective action.

d. *Investment review*

Concerning the review of investments, the sub-committee noted that the investment portfolios had been managed within the approved guidelines in 2020; and acknowledged with gratitude the work of the board of the Ecumenical Trust, in monitoring its portfolio, which reported a return of 9% in 2020. In implementing the recommendation below, concerning a small percentage allocation of endowment fund investments to a Swiss real estate fund, the sub-committee requested that the real estate fund concerned include a substantial weighting of residential property.

e. *Monitoring of objectives for income development 2018-2021*

The sub-committee received the report with gratitude. While the impact of the pandemic was discerned in the mention of postponements, there were signs of hope and solidarity in four instances of increased funding or cooperation on joint activities with one or more specialised ministries; and eight instances of funding received from new sources, including EUR 1.15 million from the European Union, for the Jerusalem office for EAPPI (for 2021-2024).

The following recommendations were approved by consensus; that executive committee:

a. require that a revised budget be prepared for approval at the extraordinary meeting of executive meeting likely to be scheduled by mid-July, reflecting COVID impacts in adaptation and delay of planned activities in 2021, and incorporating other significant financial adjustments;

b. require, that if the executive committee should not convene by mid-July, that authority be delegated to the leadership of the finance sub-committee to approve and issue a revised budget 2021 on behalf of executive committee;

c. approve an amendment to investment guidelines for the endowment fund (CHF 8.2 million at 31.3.21), reducing the minimum holding in cash from a target 5% to zero, given negative interest rates; reducing the strategic allocation of 60% in bonds by 5% to 55%; and instead, introducing a strategic allocation of 5% in a Swiss real estate fund, considered by the portfolio managers as offering opportunity for improved performance for the fund;

d. consider the opportunity of bringing proposals to the finance policy committee, for decision by central committee, with regard to WCC Investment Policy, concerning in particular a revision to the investment objectives for the general fund (CHF 7 million at 31.3.21);

e. require that an outline assembly budget be submitted as background information for the central committee in June; and that a detailed assembly budget be submitted to executive committee in November;

f. require that a financial report on the building project fund be submitted for review in November; and

g. require that a report be brought at the next meeting, confirming a satisfactory level of completion of the 2020 appraisal process, also for the field office staff

7. Assembly travel reimbursement: principles (Doc. No. 20)

The finance sub-committee reviewed the document and agreed that an amendment of the principles was required to recognize the adverse impacts of the pandemic on the member churches, noting that less than half of the member churches had paid a membership contribution in 2020.

Two years of membership contributions' payment prior to the year of the assembly will therefore no longer be a strict eligibility criterion, in order to apply and benefit from reimbursement, in full or in part, of assembly travel and accommodation costs. Allocations for reimbursements will in any case be subject to the limits of the approved budget.

The remainder of the principles remained consistent with the document reviewed at executive committee in November 2018, in Uppsala.

The recommendations that executive committee:

a. agree that the principles for reimbursement of travel costs, board and lodging for participation in the 11th Assembly be amended, given the pandemic conditions in 2020 and 2021, in order that payment of the membership contribution in both 2020 and 2021 is no longer a strict requirement for eligibility; and

b. ask the general secretary to finalize and issue the assembly reimbursement policy

were approved by consensus.

8. Reports of the steering committee, and transaction review process (Doc. Nos. 21-24)

The finance sub-committee received the steering committee reports and the updated transaction review process documents with appreciation.

While the work of the steering committee has focused so far this year on the sale process for the Kyoto building, the sub-committee also wished to bring other matters to the attention of the executive committee at this meeting.

The recommendations that executive committee take note of the following steps in the Green Village project:

a. In February 2021, the steering committee approved the negotiation parameters for the sale of Durban (office building, 12,640m^2 gross floor space, ground floor +8), and a preliminary offer was made to the interested party. Negotiations have opened, with the introduction of unexpected conditions, and without response as yet to a request to present the offer to the board of the interested party. Alternative strategies will also be pursued for the building;

b. In March 2021, a land lease price range was defined for negotiation with interested parties for Stockholm (office building, 9,040m^2 gross floor space, ground floor +6). In completing that study, the steering committee noted that land lease would entail complex legal conditions when the project was sold as "private property by floor". The principle of offering the Stockholm project under land lease also remains conditional to the outcome of a survey, now in progress, to confirm market interest;

were approved by consensus.

The finance sub-committee supported the recommendations of the steering committee to executive committee, in its report of May 2021 to the acting general secretary, and therefore also includes them directly, for consideration by executive committee, within this report as below, at points c and d, while adapting point c, given plans for an extraordinary meeting likely to be scheduled.

The recommendation that the executive committee:

c. i. Confirm agreement in principle to convene for an extraordinary meeting in early or mid-July, should it be required by the acting general secretary, by electronic means, in order to consider and decide upon the acceptance of the OF offer for the Kyoto

building, further to the recommendation of the steering committee, this being the preferred means of reaching decision; and
(only if the extraordinary meeting above not take place, or decision be required on the OF offer at a different date)
ii. Confirm agreement to conduct consultation and decision-making by electronic means through the portal, and, exceptionally with seven days' notice rather than ten; and provided a quorum of two-thirds of members be attained, and should this be required by the acting general secretary, on the recommendation of the steering committee, in order to consider and decide upon the acceptance of the OF offer for the Kyoto building

was approved by consensus.

The recommendation that the executive committee:

d. Be reminded respectfully of the confidential nature of the steering committee reports, members being bound to professional confidentiality with regard to the information shared.

was approved by consensus.

The recommendation that the executive committee:

e. Take note that in February 2021, the steering committee approved the negotiation parameters for the sale of Durban (office building, 12,640m^2 gross floor space, ground floor +8), and a preliminary offer was made to the interested party. Negotiations have opened, with the introduction of unexpected conditions, and without response as yet to a request to present the offer to the board of the interested party. Alternative strategies will also be pursued for the building;

was approved by consensus.

The recommendation that the executive committee:

f. Take note that in March 2021, a land lease price range was defined for negotiation with interested parties for Stockholm (office building, 9,040m^2 gross floor space, ground floor +6). In completing that study, the steering committee noted that land lease would entail complex legal conditions when the project was sold as "private property by floor". As decided by executive committee in November 2020, land lease continues to be the preferred strategy, subject to the outcomes of studies and the survey

was approved by consensus.

9. WCC Financial Strategy 2018-2021, Addendum for 2022

In accordance with the decision of executive committee in November 2020, an addendum to the financial strategy 2018-2021 was under preparation, to address the year 2022, which would become the fifth and additional year of the planning period, following the decision to postpone the assembly until 2022.

The acting general secretary had concurred that the working draft be made available for review by the finance sub-committee, however, given its preliminary nature, it had not been authorised for posting for review by executive committee in full. The finance sub-committee

noted that the draft would be developed further within the staff leadership group, in order that it be consistent with the addendum envisaged to the WCC Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which would also be extended for the year 2022.

The finance sub-committee concurred with the approach, and in particular with the inclusion of the strategic financial and operational objective concerning change management, with its draft outcome indicators. The finance sub-committee encouraged completion of the work.

The recommendation that the executive committee require that the acting general secretary finalise the update to the strategic financial and operational objectives for 2022, with their outcome indicators in the direction proposed, ensuring that parameters and targets are coherent with the relevant addendum to the WCC Strategic Plan 2018-2021 for the year 2022 was approved by consensus.

10. Discussion: agenda of the finance policy committee

The finance sub-committee took note of the principle that the agenda of the central committee is focused on assembly preparations. It was also noted that it was planned that the standing committees would be convened.

At this stage, sections for finance and the Green Village project had not been prepared for the report *From Busan to Karlsruhe.*

The finance sub-committee encouraged the development of an agenda for the finance policy committee that would address the following:

For information:
- Outline budget for the assembly
- Update report on finance
- Update report on Green Village
- Executive committee report to central committee, with an appendix detailing significant issues with regard to finance addressed since 2018 by the executive committee, through the finance sub-committee, or which were currently in progress.

For suggested action:
- WCC financial strategy 2018-2021, Addendum for 2022
- Draft of the finance and Green Village sections for the report From Busan to Karlsruhe; and
- Review of the WCC Investment Policy, with possible suggested actions on investment objectives.

11. Other matters

The sub-committee received the report on follow up to prior decisions (Doc. No. 15), noting that all open matters were addressed at this meeting, or were planned to be addressed in November 2021.

At the end of the presentation of the report H.E. Metropolitan Seraphim expressed his worry about the assembly budget and hoped that the pledges made would be realized.

Mrs Glynn-Mackoul reminded the committee that although the timing for the decision is not yet known, the decision which will need to be made by the executive committee on the Kyoto building will be urgent. If an online meeting is not possible (recommendation 8.c. above), it will be important that all the executive committee members respond quickly when the decision is to be made. The recommendation allows for seven days to decide.

A brief discussion took place affirming that a decision to sell the Kyoto land and project is required to be taken by executive committee as a whole, as it is such a significant and prominent decision. Members of the LCC hold the authority to sign a deed of sale, further to the decision of executive committee. The WCC legal advisors have advised that it is preferable that decisions are recorded through a system with password control, such as the WCC portal, rather than by e-mail. For this reason, the portal will be used.

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios thanked the committee members and its leadership for the good work done.

The entire report was adopted by consensus.

F. Closing Remarks and Prayer

The date for the next online meeting of the executive committee, to address assembly preparations and a revised 2021 budget, was set for Thursday, 15 July at 14:00 (GVA time) for two hours.

With regard to the report of the executive committee to the central committee, a motion was made to delegate to the leadership of the central committee the further refinement, additions and finalization of the report. This recommendation was approved by consensus.

Mrs Velilla de Medio thanked the committee for including her in this executive committee meeting, the first executive with interpretation. She said she would be glad to share her positive experience with her fellow central committee members from Latin America and the Caribbean. H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios assured her that she is always welcome and is a part of the ecumenical family.

The vice-moderator said that with the blessing of the risen Lord the committee had finished its work after four days of extensive work. He thanked the members, the staff under the leadership of the acting general secretary, Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, the assembly office and the interpreters. On behalf of the moderator and the other vice-moderator he wished everyone well, especially in these challenging times.

Bishop Rex R. B. Reyes, Jr. (Episcopal Church in the Philippines) led a prayer from the First Nations in Canada and closed with Philippians 4:8 – “Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is

commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

The moderator, Dr Abuom, thanked H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios for leading the meeting today and guiding the committee in its decisions, effectively and efficiently.

After a reminder about the global prayer for the Holy Land, taking place online at 16:30 (GVA time), the executive committee was officially closed.

APPENDIX 1 – Participants List

Leadership of the Central Committee
Dr Agnes ABUOM, Anglican Church of Kenya
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr GENNADIOS OF SASSIMA, Ecumenical Patriarchate
Bishop Mary Ann SWENSON, United Methodist Church
Fr Prof. Dr Ioan SAUCA, World Council of Churches

Members
H.E. Dr Archbishop Abune AREGAWI, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken AYKAZIAN, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
Rev. Dr Hyunju BAE, Presbyterian Church of Korea
Bishop Petra BOSSE-HUBER, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
Ms Emily Jane EVANS, Uniting Church in Australia
Mrs Anne GLYNN-MACKOUL, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
Archpriest Mikhail GOUNDIAEV, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
Rev. Karl JOHNSON, Jamaica Baptist Union
Rev. Martina Viktorie KOPECKÁ, Czechoslovak Hussite Church *(apologies Thursday)*
H.E. Metropolitan Serafim KYKOTIS, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa
Rev. Everdith Yaritza LANDRAU, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Dr Manhong LIN, China Christian Council
H.E. Metropolitan Zachariah Mar NICHOLOVOS, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr NIFON OF TARGOVISTE, Romanian Orthodox Church
Bishop Simo PEURA, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Bishop Rex R. B. REYES, Jr., Episcopal Church in the Philippines
Rev. Karin VAN DEN BROEKE, Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Mrs Ana María VELILLA DE MEDIO, Iglesia Evangélica de los Discipulos de Cristo

Apologies
Rev. Cora Luisa ANTONIO MATAMOROS, Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua
Rev. Dr Festus Ambe ASANA, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
Rev. Samson Olasupo Adeniyi AYOKUNLE, Nigerian Baptist Convention
Mr Rudelmar BUENO DE FARIA, Advisor, ACT Alliance
Rev. Taaroanui MARAEA, Église protestante Maohi
Bishop John F. WHITE, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Staff
Mr Douglas L. CHIAL, Director, Office of the General Secretariat
Ms Catherine CHRIST-TAHA, Conference Office
Ms Elaine DYKES, Finance Director
Ms Marianne EJDERSTEN, Communications Director
Mr Marc-Henri HEINIGER, Assembly Logistics Coordinator
Mr Georges LEMOPOULOS, Consensus Consultant
Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso MATEUS, Interim Deputy General Secretary
Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo PHIRI, Deputy General Secretary
Mr Peter PROVE, CCIA Director

Ms Karina VARTANOVA, Finance Manager

Interpreters
Ms María Baile Rubio
Ms Maria Becerra
Ms Georgina Piccione Thomas
Ms Pamela Valdes

APPENDIX 2 – Jerusalem Liaison Office Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

1. Preamble

The Jerusalem Liaison Office Advisory Committee (JLOAC) will be established according to World Council of Churches Supplement to the Rules Guidelines, Procedures, Terms of Reference (Bossey, Switzerland 20-26 November 2019, Doc. No. 11.2). In relation to reference and advisory groups, the document states that:

- Advisory groups are appointed by the general secretary to consult and advise the general secretary on matters internal to the WCC staff, specific projects or to stimulate discussion on emerging issues. Advisory groups report to the general secretary, and, through the general secretary, report to the executive committee when recommendations relate to programme initiatives or WCC policies or practices.

- The mandate, term, composition and budget of the advisory group is proposed by the general secretary and approved by the executive committee.

- The term of an advisory group does not extend beyond the term of the central committee during which the advisory group was appointed.

2. Mandate

The Jerusalem Liaison Office Advisory Committee will work under the framework of WCC's policy on Palestine and Israel. The JLOAC is responsible for providing guidance, advice and support to the WCC programmes and staff based in Jerusalem and operating under the Jerusalem Liaison Office (JLO). Its specific tasks will be to:

- Advise the WCC general secretary on how best to respond to relevant developments through its programmes and activities in order to promote a just peace in Palestine and Israel and help sustain the Christian presence in the Holy Land, and

- Receive information about the work of the different programmes and activities of the JLO
- Analyze the political, social and economic context of the region, in particular from the perspective of the churches and church-related organizations.

3. Membership

The membership of the group reflects the approved structure of the Jerusalem Liaison Office and includes representatives of local churches, local partner organisations and members of WCC Jerusalem-based programme reference groups.

All members of the JLOAC are appointed by the WCC general secretary. The JLO Coordinator will serve as convenor and secretary of the committee.

The committee will be composed of:

- 5 representatives of the local churches
- 1 representative of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)
- 1 representative of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) International Reference Group
- 1 representative of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) reference group
- 2 representatives of local Christian-based organisations.
- The WCC Programme Executive for the Middle East region (ex officio)

The moderator of the committee will be an ordained person proposed by the Heads of Churches and appointed by the WCC general secretary. The moderator will be one of the five representatives of the local churches.

The term of JLOAC membership is up to the next WCC Assembly.

4. Time table of meetings:

The JLOAC will meet regularly (frequency to be decided by the members, at least once in every three months). A minimum of 10 days prior written notice must be given to all members, in addition to a proposed agenda for further input. In addition to regular meetings, extraordinary meetings may be called by the moderator or JLO Coordinator, based on urgent need and/or request from the WCC. In cases of particular urgency, shorter notice for a meeting may be given at the discretion of the moderator.

5. Roles and functions

- *Moderator of JLOAC*
  - Preparing the agenda together with the WCC Programme Executive for the Middle East region, and in consultation with the JLO Coordinator;
  - Moderating JLOAC meetings;
  - Ensuring that decisions/recommendations are followed up;
  - Ensuring the link between the different members/constituents of the Advisory Committee and the JLO.

- *Programme Executive for the Middle East region*
  - Working with the moderator and the JLO Coordinator to set priorities and to prepare meeting agendas;
  - Ensuring the link with WCC general secretary and the staff working on issues pertaining to the region;

- Ensuring the overall coherence of WCC programme for Just Peace in Palestine and Israel.
- Ensuring that the report of the JLOAC is communicated to the WCC general secretary and relevant staff.

- *JLO Coordinator*
  - Calling meetings and issuing notice thereof, as described above;
  - Arranging all logistics for the meeting;
  - Circulating the agenda and any required document and minutes;
  - Arranging for meeting minutes to be taken and distributed;
  - Following up to ensure that agreed upon action points are carried out.

6. Changes

Changes can be made to these Terms of Reference with the agreement of the JLOAC moderator and the WCC general secretary according to rules and regulations set by the central committee.